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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE  
12 June 1954

TO: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: The 12 June confidence vote in the French National Assembly

Premier Laniel will probably continue to head the French government, despite the 306-293 vote against him in the 12 June confidence vote. Since the opposition failed to muster a constitutional majority of 314, his resignation is not mandatory, although in similar instances in the past, a premier defeated by less than a constitutional majority has always resigned.

Laniel, however, was reported to have stated prior to the 13 May vote that he would not resign under such circumstances, and on 10 June president Coty was reported to have said he would not accept a resignation.

In view of the 322 to 263 decision by which the Assembly rejected premier Laniel's effort of 9 June to avoid a vote of confidence, the smaller opposition vote on 12 June reflects the Assembly's unwillingness to face the full consequences of the overthrow of the government and in particular the inability of the various opposition elements to agree on a successor.

Efforts to find an alternative to Laniel will continue, but until the EDC question is settled there seems little chance for the formation of another coalition in the present assembly. The Popular Republicans (MRP) would refuse to join in a government opposed to EDC. The Gaullists' opposition to EDC may even bring about the resignation of some of their ministers in Laniel's cabinet and in any case would prevent Gaullist participation in a new coalition favoring EDC.

President Coty is reported inclined to favor such pro-EDC candidates as Bidault (MRP), Pinay (Independent group) and Robert Schuman (MRP), although he would also consider Edgar Faure (Radical Socialist) who has recently come out against EDC. Coty is reported opposed to dissolution, believing that new elections now would favor the Communists as well as the MRP and the Socialists.

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Furthermore, dissolution of the Assembly now would make it constitutionally mandatory for the Communist party to participate in the interim caretaker cabinet. President Coty would be legally required to name the president of the Assembly, Socialist Andre Le Troquer, as premier. The latter, in conjunction with the Assembly steering committee would name a new minister of the interior, who exercises control of the police.

All parties in the Assembly would then be given proportional representation in the government through ministers without portfolio.

Elections must be held on a Sunday within 20 to 30 days following the dissolution. The new Assembly convenes the third Thursday following the election.



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Meanwhile, the National Assembly has adjourned until 11:00 AM (EDT) to allow Laniel to consult the president and party leaders.

HUNTINGTON D. SHELDON  
Assistant Director  
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